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The Cochineal Creeper and the Fascinating Grosbeak: a re-examination of some names of John Latham

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Perusal of the recent literature of New Caledonian birds reveals the existence of 2 names for the same honeyeater. Salomonsen (1967) used the name *Myzomela sanguinolenta* (Latham 1801) for the Scarlet Honey-eater of New Caledonia; presumably this was the source of its use by Keast (1985). Other authors have regularly used *M. dibapha* (Latham 1801), for example Mayr (1932, 1945), Koopman (1957), Delacour (1966), Vuilleumier & Gochfeld (1976), Stokes (1980) and Hannecart & Letocart (1980). Indeed the papers of Koopman and Salomonsen are at direct odds. Although they both recognized that *M. caledonica* Forbes 1879 is in fact the subspecies of a *Myzomela* found on New Caledonia, each has placed it under a different species names, *dibapha* and *sanguinolenta* respectively.

Wallacean birds in the *sanguinolenta/dibapha* grouping have either been placed in *dibapha* (e.g. Mathews 1930), *sanguinolenta* (e.g. Watling 1983, White & Bruce 1986), separated as a single allospecies *M. boiei* (S. Müller 1843) (e.g. Wolters 1982) or split into 3 allospecific groupings

M. boiei, *M. chloroptera* Walden 1872 and *M. wakoloensis* Forbes 1883 (e.g. McKean 1982, presumably following Salomonsen 1967).

Australian birds have usually been placed in *sanguinolenta* (oppositely to most authors for New Caledonia) and this name has been consistently used throughout Australian journals. The only author (apart from G. M. Mathews) to have used *dibapha* for Australian birds this century is Koopman (1957), and he was undoubtedly following Mathews' various works.

Mathews (1927) first used *dibapha* in the supplement to his *The Birds of Australia*, where he noted;

"*Certhia sanguinolenta* Latham, 1801, is indeterminable. Read *Myzomela dibapha* (Latham).

Certhia dibapha Latham, Index Ornith. Suppl. p. xxxvii, 1801 (after May 30th): New South Wales (Watling drawing No. 108, not 107, and is the Cochineal Creeper)."

Mathews later (1930, 1931, 1946) used *dibapha*, the *Systema* work of 1930 being probably the most important in keeping this name in the literature. A more detailed account of these names of John Latham is clearly necessary.

Myzomela sanguinolenta and *M. dibapha* were described on the same page, xxxvii, of Latham (1801b) under the genus *Certhia*.

C. sanguinolenta was described as:—

"*Certhia coccineo-fanguinea, dorfomaculis deformibus nigris, fubtus cinerea, gula juguloque albis.*" and is referred to the **Sanguineous Creeper** in Latham's *General Synopsis of Birds*, Supplement II (1801a).

C. dibapha was described immediately below *C. sanguinolenta* as:—

"*C. coccineo-rubra abdomine albo, maculis dorfi pectoris per oculos alis caudaque nigris.*" and is referred to the **Cochineal Creeper** in Latham (1801a).

It has been generally assumed that Latham based his descriptions on copies that he made of drawings and paintings that passed through his hands, one of the major series of these being the Watling drawings (see Sawyer 1949, Hindwood 1970). The Watling drawings were made between 1788 and 1795 and appear to have been assembled by Surgeon-General John White in Australia, a principal artist being Thomas Watling. Upon his return to England in 1797, White gave at least some of the drawings to A. B. Lambert. Lambert then made copies of the Watling drawings (the Lambert drawings) and lent these to Latham, who returned them in January 1800 (see especially Hindwood 1970). Strickland (May, 1843), when reviewing the Lambert drawings, noted that Latham wrote on each drawing the name which he intended to give to the species pictured. Sharpe (1906) noted that the Watling drawings all bore, in Latham's hand, the common and scientific names and a reference to where Latham published his name first, these annotations obviously written at a later date.

The first person to review the paintings was G. R. Gray in Dec 1842 (publ. 1843) when he noted that *Certhia dibapha* could be recognized as a distinct species in the genus *Myzomela*; but he was not able to identify *C. sanguinolenta* with any known species.

Strickland (1843), who was helped by Gould, had suggested that *C. sanguinolenta* was probably the female of *Myzomela dibapha*. Shortly afterwards Gould (June, 1843) published part xi of his *Birds of Australia*, where the name *Myzomela sanguinolenta* is used; he was almost universally followed after this date, especially in Australia.

When reviewing all the Watling drawings, Sharpe (1906) referred drawings number 107 and 108 to *Certhia dibapha*, the Cochineal Creeper, 109 to *C. sanguinolenta*, the Sanguineous Creeper and 120 to *C. erythropygia*, the Red-rumped Creeper. Usually considered a junior synonym of both the other names, *C. erythropygia* was described by Latham (1801b) on page xxxviii, the page following that on which the former 2 were described. Hindwood (1970) referred all 4 paintings to *Myzomela sanguinolenta*, ignoring Mathews' (1927) earlier comments.

The description of the Sanguineous Creeper in Latham (1801a) is accompanied by an etching (plate 130) which corresponds reasonably well in patterning, though not exactly in pose, with Watling drawing 109 (I have examined black and white photographs of the Watling drawings lodged at the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales). Strickland (1843) noted that this etching was not one of the exact copies of the Watling drawings, but this is not surprising given that the etching would have been drawn from Latham's copy of the Lambert drawing, which was itself a copy of the Watling drawing.

The English description and the etching (in Latham 1801a), the Latin description (in Lathan 1801b) and Watling drawing 109 reveal the same features, i.e. those of *C. sanguinolenta*, namely a white chin and throat, but otherwise completely dull brown below. If the bird had been an immature male Scarlet Honeyeater from Australia, it would have had either some scarlet markings on the chin or at least have been completely brown below (as in *C. erythropygia*, Watling drawing 120). The bases of the body feathers of adult male Scarlet Honeyeaters are usually black, hence occasionally creating an appearance of black blotching within scarlet and white areas when the plumage is worn or ruffled. Some of the body feathers do not have black bases, however, but tend towards the pale brown of immature or female birds, though never white.

Mathews (1927) was thus correct (and Gray before him) in assuming that *C. sanguinolenta* was not readily identifiable with the Scarlet Honeyeater of Australia. Mathews chose Watling drawing 108 as the drawing of the lectotype of *C. dibapha* Latham 1801, and not 107, for the Cochineal Creeper, presumably because the bird pictured in 107 does not have the black loral streak found in Scarlet Honeyeaters, while drawing 108 does have this feature.

The name for the Australian bird (Latham's Sanguineous Creeper) must, indeed, be *Myzomela dibapha* (Latham 1801) and not *M. sanguinolenta* (Latham 1801). A quick check in any usual reference for *Myzomela* (e.g. Forbes 1879, Salomonsen 1967) would suggest that the genus was based on *Meliphaga cardinalis* Vigors & Horsfield 1827, which is a junior homonym of *Certhia cardinalis* Gmelin 1789 and a junior synonym of *Certhia sanguinolenta*. This would normally create nomenclatural problems suggesting either a replacement genus-group name (in this case *Melomyza* Mathews 1913) or an application to the International

Commission of Zoological Nomenclature for a new type species for *Myzomela* (see Article 70 of ICBN 1985). Fortunately most reference works are incorrect in this instance.

Strickland (1843) was the first to assign *Myzomela cardinalis* (Vigors & Horsfield 1827) to another species. The species he chose was *Certhia dibapha* Latham 1801, previously considered a junior synonym of *C. sanguinolenta* and thus previously ignored in nomenclatorial citations. If separated into the 5 allospecific groupings of Salomonsen (1967), New Caledonian birds become *M. caledonica* Forbes 1879.

It is of interest to note that there is another painting besides Watling's *M. dibapha* from the early 1790's. Painting 54 in the Sydney paintings, lodged in the Mitchell Library, is probably a better interpretation of the species than Watling drawing 108, which Mathews chose as the type (see also Hindwood 1965).

To summarize: *Certhia sanguinolenta* Latham 1801 [= *Myzomela sanguinolenta*] is indeterminable. The next available name for the Scarlet Honeyeater is *Certhia dibapha* Latham 1801. This does not affect the availability of the genus-group name *Myzomela* Vigors & Horsfield 1827. The valid name for the Scarlet Honeyeater from Australia is thus *Myzomela dibapha* (Latham 1801).

Another name of Latham's from the same work (1801b) has caused similar problems. *Loxia fascinans* was described on page xlvi as:

"*L. fufco-nigra fubtus alba, rectricibus exterioribus albis.*" and referred to the Fascinating Grosbeak in Latham (1801a).

Gray (1843) could not identify this species either, though Gould (in Strickland 1843) identified it with the species now known as the Jacky Winter in Australia. Strangely, Gould used *Microeca macroptera* (Vigors & Horsfield 1827) for this species in part xxxii of his *Birds of Australia* (1848) and later reverted back to *M. fascinans* in his *Handbook to the Birds of Australia* (1865).

Sharpe (1879) also referred the Jacky Winter to *M. fascinans*. When he reviewed the Watling drawings in 1906 he did not mention finding a portrait of *Loxia fascinans* but did note that the White-tailed Warbler (painting 201) was a synonym of *Loxia fascinans*. This bird was described on page lv of Latham (1801b) as *Sylvia leucophaea*;

"*S. fufca fubtus albo-caerulefcens, macula remigum rectricibufque (2 intermediis exceptis) albis.*" and referred to the White-tailed Warbler of Latham (1801a).

Microeca fascinans was used until 1923 when Mathews (1923a) noted; "*Loxia fascinans* Latham cannot be used for the Brown Flycatcher. The next name is *Sylvia leucophaea* Latham Index Ornith. Suppl., p. lv., 1801 (after May 30th.)."

M. leucophaea did not gain wide usage until RAOU (1960) stated that *leucophaea* had priority over *fascinans*, an obviously false statement. McAllan & Bruce (1989), following the reasons given by RAOU (1960), again used *fascinans* once they had determined its priority.

Mayr (in Mayr & Cottrell 1986) referred the change of name from *fascinans* to *leucophaea* to Mathews (1930). Unfortunately Mathews gave no cogent reason for the change of name in this work. He had, however, earlier given some explanation. In 1923 he was able to examine the

tracings made by G. R. Gray when Gray reviewed the Lambert drawings (Mathews 1923b). These tracings totalled 54 in number and had written on them in Gray's hand the names given to the birds by Latham and the number of the drawing from the Lambert drawings. In 50 of these tracings Mathews had been able to determine that they were direct copies of the Watling drawings, but 4 could not be identified with this series.

Of these 4 tracings, one was undoubtedly a copy of one of the missing Watling drawings (*Anas rhynchos* Latham 1801), one was a further picture of *Turdus volitans* (figured twice in the Watling drawings), one was an alternative picture for *Certhia chrysotis* (= *Meliphaga fusca* Gould 1837, see Salomonsen 1967), while the last missing drawing was *Loxia fascinans*. As all the other tracings of Gray were correct it must be assumed that the tracing of *L. fascinans* was correct.

Mathews then noted;

"*Loxia fascinans* is based on the Lambert drawing which is absolutely and definitely not the *Microeca* with which the name has been associated, but is of some Finch as the genus chosen by Latham indicated. It is comparable with B.M. No. 168 [=Temporal Finch, *Neochmia temporalis* (Latham 1801)], but that is also a Finch. As already recorded, *Sylvia leucophaea* Latham given to Lambert, Dr III, 28 (B.M. No. 201) represents the *Microeca*, and this specific name must be used."

This conclusion was also suggested by Gray (1843) who, when not able to identify the species was still able to assign *L. fascinans* to the genus *Estrela* (*sic*).

This is at direct odds with Gould (*in Strickland* 1843) who determined that *Loxia fascinans* was the same as *Microeca macroptera* (Vigors & Horsfield 1827), which is definitely a Jacky Winter (note that the type [which lacks a tail] of this name was examined by Sharpe in 1879 and is still in the British Museum—Warren & Harrison 1971). However, Gould must have been mistaken as he also determined that *L. fascinans* was the same as *S. leucophaea*, which is definitely not a Jacky Winter.

Hindwood (1970) when discussing Watling drawing 201 (the Whitetailed Warbler = *Sylvia leucophaea*) noted;

"201. (3/28). Rose Robin, *Petroica rosea* female. Sharpe identified this drawing with the Jacky Winter *Microeca leucophaea*, and the remarks on the sheet about the habits of the bird agree well with that species: however, the white on the wing and the relatively long tail best suit the Rose Robin."

Hindwood was correct in the assumption that the species concerned was not a Jacky Winter. I have also examined a black and white photograph of this drawing and it does not correspond with this species. Not only does it have a white wing bar but it also lacks the white superciliary stripe found in the Jacky Winter.

Hindwood's assertion that it was a female Rose Robin *Petroica rosea* Gould 1840 is however also not tenable, as this species has 2 wing bars. The female Flame Robin *P. phoenica* Gould 1837 often appears to have one wing bar, but it also has an obvious white forehead (absent in Watling drawing 201). Other species that look similar and have white wing bars are the Dusky Robin *Melanodryas vittata* (Quoy & Gaimard 1830) and the

female Hooded Robin *Melanodryas cucullata* (Latham 1801). In both cases however they have less white in the tail than Latham's White-tailed Warbler. The "relatively long tail" as noted by Hindwood does not agree well with any of the Australian flycatchers apart from the genus *Rhipidura*, which it is definitely not.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from this is that both *Loxia fascinans* and *Sylvia leucophaea* are indeterminable. Gould himself may have been undecided on his determination of the paintings concerned as he used the name *Microeca macroptera* 5 years later (see above). In such a situation the next available name for the Jacky Winter or Brown Flycatcher is Gould's second choice, *Microeca macroptera* Vigors & Horsfield 1827. The genus-group name stays as *Microeca* as this is based on the subspecies *assimilis* described by Gould in 1841.

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The nest and eggs of *Phylloscopus budongoensis*

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The Uganda Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus budongoensis* is a local bird of eastern Zaire, Uganda and western Kenya. Its nest and eggs have apparently not been described. This note records information on a nest found in Kakamega Forest, W. Kenya on 31 August 1989, inside tall shady forest with well developed understorey on the slight slope of a hill at c. 1700 m elevation. The incubating bird was identified very clearly, the nest being first found as a consequence of its flying out and perching nearby, and again soon afterwards as it again left the nest when I returned with Mr Marcel Holyoak to take photographs.